



Employment & Independence

**UTAH STATE  
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REHABILITATION**

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**Client Service Memorandum 2014-04**

TO: All Client Service Staff  
FROM: Rachel Anderson, Transition & Supported Employment Coordinator  
SUBJECT: Temporary guidance for Customized Employment and Discovery for clients who are most significantly disabled and need more intensive supports.  
Date Issued: October 13, 2014  
Date Effective: October 13, 2014  
Date Revised: December 4, 2014

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Client Service Memorandum is to offer clarification and guidance regarding the provision of Customized Employment and Discovery to clients. The guidelines in this memo will be in effect until the Customized Employment CSM policy chapter is finalized and in place.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Customized Employment** means competitive work in an integrated setting obtained through a set of flexible strategies, services and supports for an individual with a **most significant disability**. Customized Employment requires a person-centered individualized determination of the strengths, needs and interests of the individual and is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual and the business needs of the employer. Customized Employment consists of the following components:

- A. A discovery process of job exploration;
- B. Working with an employer to facilitate job placement, including:
  1. Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or previously unidentified and unmet need;
  2. Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervisions (including performance, evaluation and review) and determining worksite location;
  3. Representation by a Community Rehabilitation Program, chosen by the client through the provision of informed choice, or self-representation by the client in working with an employer to facilitate placement; and
  4. Providing services and supports, such as job coaching, at the work location.
  5. Community Rehabilitation Programs.

**Discovery** means gathering information from the job seeker and the Customized Employment Team (a group of multiple partners, including the employment specialist who all jointly take some responsibility for the job seeker's needs; however, the job seeker is the ultimate decision-maker) to determine the job seeker's interests, skills, and preferences related to potential employment that guide the development of a customized job. The discovery process will be conducted by a CRP.



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**Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)** refers to an approved and certified provider that offers a wide range of support services to VR clients to maximize opportunities for employment. These services may include:

1. Assessments of vocational rehabilitation needs
2. Job development, placement, coaching and retention services
3. Life skills/disability adjustment training
4. Supported Employment services and extended services

**Job Coaching** is the support provided by a CRP at the client's job site, to teach clients the essential skills needed to learn and maintain employment, provide the necessary prompts and possible behavioral changes and build natural supports to ensure continued success at work. These services may include:

1. Attending employer training with both the client and Job Coach
2. Meetings with the worksite Supervisors
3. Reviewing, training, and teaching essential job duties with client
4. Individualized training for learning job tasks (as a supplement to employer training)
5. Performing onsite follow-up checks with client to insure work needs are being met.
6. Providing direct interventions on the job
7. Identifying and setting up accommodations in coordination with employer and VR
8. Building natural supports for continued success, as it relates to work
9. Shadowing and observation
10. Understanding of continued training for client, as Job Coach tapers off supports
11. Developing client understanding work culture (breaks, check in's, calling in sick etc)
12. Work conditioning and hardening
13. Support and encouragement

**Supported Employment** means competitive work in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work; because the nature and severity of the disability, intensive SE services are needed for a period not to exceed 24 months from the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and then transitioned to extended support services. See CSM Chapter 30 for more information and details on USOR policy.

## **GUIDANCE**

**As a VR Counselor, what you can expect from a CRP who is engaging in Customized Employment or Discovery with your client:**

- Identifying specific job duties or employer expectations that are negotiated with employers;
- Targeting individualized job goals to negotiate based on the needs, strengths, and interests of the employment seeker;
- Meeting the unique needs of the employment seeker and the discrete, emerging needs of the employer;
- Starting with the individual as the source of information for exploring potential employment options;



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- Offering representation, as needed, for employment seekers to assist in negotiating with employers;
- Occurring in integrated, non-congregate environments in the community or in a business alongside people who do not have disabilities;
- Resulting in pay at least the prevailing wage (no sub-minimum wages);
- Creating employment through self-employment and business ownership;
- Facilitating an amalgam of supports and funding sources that may include Workforce Investment (One-Stops/Career Centers), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Medicaid, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Schools, Social Security (SSA), families, and other partners coordinated in ways to meet the needs of the individual (Griffin, et al., 2007)

**When CRP's are engaged in Customized Employment, they are participating in Discovery, not your typical realm of job assessment and placement:**

Discovery is not planning, it is an assessment process that seeks to answer the questions "who is this person?" and "what are the ideal conditions of employment?" The process most often starts at home, includes an inventory of the surrounding neighborhood (with transportation and natural supports an on-going employment and inclusion issue, it makes sense to look for individual vocational themes, and subsequently, opportunities nearby), and expands to places where interests can be explored through informational interviews, paid work experiences, or engagement in activities that showcase tasks, skills and interests. One vital point to remember during Discovery is that the CE team, employment specialist, employment seeker, VRC, family member and whoever else is involved, is not looking for employment; the outcome should be a reflection of the complexity of all human lives. In other words, there should be multiple employment directions revealed, not a job description, but rather vocational themes and a revealing of skills, which are used to create employment in the community (Griffin, et al, 2014).

**Which VR clients are eligible for Customized Employment and Discovery?**

- CE is for clients who are classified as Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) and have Supported Employment (SE) funding available (DSPD, SWI, Mental Health, etc.). Follow the Chapter 30 SE Policy, through the *Work Strategy Assessment*, and then move forward with CE as appropriate.
- Clients whom the traditional SJBT Milestones are not the level of support necessary to find and maintain appropriate permanent employment.
- Until an official CE policy is in place, VR Counselors follow the SE Policy, with the option of adding a Discovery fee (by way of this memo) and then continue with the SE Milestones as outlined in Chapter 30.

**How to choose a CRP that can provide Customized Employment:**

Not all CRP's are trained and certified to provide CE services. The process of becoming certified is intensive and time consuming. Any provider that would like to provide CE supports to VR Clients must be approved through the Supported Employment Coordinator. The only CRP's a counselor can authorize to provide this service at this time are through:

- Pathways to Employment (CE program through PARC)



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- RISE
- UWork Employment Services
- Covenant Employment

*Not all staff are trained and certified in providing Customized Employment. Begin with outreach to one of these agencies, and identify an appropriate job coach who is trained and certified.*

## **POLICY**

**Client Service Recommendation:** Once the client has been identified as both MSD and SE, and is ready to begin the job search process, the client will participate in a *Work Strategy Assessment*. Once the assessment is complete, the SE Team will meet to discuss the findings. If it is agreed that the client would benefit from CE and the additional Discovery fee, a Client Service Recommendation must be approved at the Field Service Director level of approval. The request must provide:

- Justification for why the client would benefit from Customized Employment
- Verification that the client is classified as MSD
- Verification of the clients Supported Employment agency
- Customized Employment trained CRP is being used (to the best of the counselors knowledge, and through one of the approved CRPs below)

*The Client Service Recommendation at this stage is to verify that the client is eligible for this service, and that an appropriate provider is being used. There will be more concrete guidelines on which providers can provide this service once a policy is in place.*

### **Authorization for Customized Employment:**

- Work Strategy Assessment (\$500, 1.5) is the initial phase of the assessment.
- Discovery is the continued CE assessment (\$1,000, 1.5) once agreed upon by the SE Team, and approved at the FSD level of approval.
- After the Discover Assessment continue on through the traditional SE milestones as appropriate.